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## Advent 1 • Isaiah 2:1–5 • December 1, 2013

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## Advent 1 • Isaiah 2:1–5 • December 1, 2013

A new church year has begun, and the prophet Isaiah gives us a glimpse of the future new creation by focusing us upon the past. Isaiah is prophesying about that which is yet to come in the restoration of the church, begun in Christ's first advent and yet to be concluded in his second advent. Isaiah prophesies within the context of the past in order for the Israelites to understand the future. It is almost a literal backing up into the future.

Our twenty-first-century minds look towards the future, and in some respects do so without much focus on the past. Conceptualizing moving in reverse in a way that undoes what has transpired, rights wrongs, and even improves what was before is a concept which is difficult for our minds to grasp. Backing down the street does not take miles off of our car as though they were never driven. Even repenting of a wrong we have done and receiving forgiveness from the one we have wronged does not undo the historical event which took place, at least, not in the context of our frail humanity. Yet, this is precisely the kind of restoration and reversal that Isaiah proclaims in the text; a reversal possible only in Christ.

The Israelites were well accustomed to the mountain of the Lord; it was the place where Yahweh met with his people: Moses receiving the Commandments on Sinai, Abraham and Isaac on Moriah, and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. So, in Christ, will the church be lifted up and exalted as the mountain of the Lord; the place of the Lord's dwelling with his people. The nations will stream to the mountain of the Lord and dwell in Christ. A great reversal indeed, for water does not flow up hill, but the nations stream upward to the church. Christ draws them in.

Judgment is needed and it will come; Isaiah makes this quite clear. Yahweh will judge between the nations. In this judgment comes peace where there has been war. Peace between the nations which were set against each other in the sin that corrupted the old creation. Peace between God and the nations. Peace between God and Israel. Peace between God and us. In so doing things will be reversed and the new creation will emerge. Weapons of war will be reduced to tools of agriculture, for in Christ, in the new creation, the house of Jacob will walk in the light of the Lord.

In Christ the church is restored. In his holy incarnation he backs the church out of death into life. By entering into the old creation, taking on human flesh, being lifted up in death on the cross, and being raised to new life, Christ begins the great reversal and initiates the dawn of the new creation. He brings the church back through death to life in the river of salvation, Holy Baptism; and the church is drawn up to the mountain of the Lord.

### Suggested Outline

- I. The reversal – backing out of the past into the future
- II. The world in need of Christ's advent
- III. Christ lifts the church out of death by lifting himself in death and resurrection.
- IV. Christ has reversed all things and made them new.

Paul Philp